United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/869
16 April 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General, addressing European Parliament, stresses danger created by heavy concentration of armaments in Middle East; calls for dialogue between Western Europe and developing world.

- Japan and Greece announce emergency humanitarian assistance to displaced Kurds in northern Iraq; Japan also donates $8 million to support activities of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to help Ethiopian returnees from Somalia and Somali refugees in Ethiopia.

- Regional seminar on impact of economic and political reform on status of women in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union concludes in Vienna. Hears calls for integration of women's interests in social and economic policy.

- Peru is hit by earthquakes which kill 53 and injures 232 people, according to report by Office of United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar arrived in Strasbourg this morning to address the European Parliament and to hold discussions in the afternoon with a large group of parliamentarians.

Before addressing the Parliament in a solemn meeting, the Secretary-General had half an hour of talks with the Parliament's President, Enrique Baron Crespo, with whom he discussed the problem of minorities in Europe and the situation of the Kurds in Iraq.

In his address, the Secretary-General stressed the dangers created by the heavy concentration of armaments in regions such as the Middle East, and called for a dialogue between Western Europe and the developing world.

In the afternoon, the Secretary-General met parliamentarians and representatives of the political groups in the European Parliament to answer questions from them concerning all aspects of the United Nations work.

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The Secretary-General then received two representatives of the Council of Europe, Messrs. Davies and Rosenstiel, who delivered to him a message from the President of the Council of Europe, Catherine Lalumiere, on the situation of the Kurds in Iraq. The Secretary-General then met with former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing for a discussion of the international situation.

The Secretary-General was scheduled to meet later in the afternoon with Jacques Poos, President of the Council of the European Community and Foreign Minister of Luxembourg. He would then meet with Vasos Lyssarides, President of the Parliament of Cyprus, before leaving Strasbourg for Paris, where for the next three days he will preside over meetings of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and will meet with President François Mitterrand of France.

As he entered the European Parliament this morning, the Secretary-General was asked by the press whether he thought that the decision taken by the European Community to put Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on trial for war crimes could interfere with his diplomacy in Iraq. The Secretary-General replied that it was an initiative which he respected, but which deserved much study and reflection in order not to prejudice the humanitarian action of the United Nations.

In a separate development, a United Nations official announced today that Nepal had inadvertently been omitted from the list of countries participating in the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM).

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The Government of Japan has decided to dispatch a disaster relief team to Iran and to send emergency relief materials to Iran and Turkey to help Kurdish refugees.

In a statement dated 12 April, and transmitted by Japanese Ambassador Yoshio Hatano, the Government's Foreign Ministry said it had initiated relief efforts out of humanitarian concern and in response to requests from Iran and Turkey.

The Japanese decision comes in addition to a donation of $10 million to the Iraqi refugees through the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO).

The Government of Greece has also decided to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to displaced Kurds. In a press release issued yesterday, Greece's Permanent Mission to the United Nations announced that the first cargo of assistance, consisting of foodstuff, clothing and medicines, had already been delivered to the Iranian Red Crescent by a mission of the Hellenic Red Cross led by its President.

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In a separate development, the Japanese Ambassador informed the Secretary-General, in a letter dated 11 April, that his Government had decided to donate about $8 million to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to support its activities in favour of the Ethiopian returnees from Somalia and Somali refugees in Ethiopia.

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Women in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were likely to experience increased hardship as a result of recent economic and political reforms, according to speakers at a United Nations regional seminar which ended in Vienna on 12 April.

The prospect of sweeping change retarding rather than advancing the pace of equality was highlighted in various studies that were presented at the seminar. The conclusions drawn pointed to a growing threat of a negative impact on the status of women, especially in the short run, as economic hardships were likely to increase. The loosening of the social safety net, the decline in living standards, along with growing unemployment, were cited as likely to have a more severe effect on women than on men.

The recommendations adopted at the seminar called for integrating women's interests into social and economic policy, strengthening national bodies on women's advancement and assisting women in training and retraining to meet employment challenges. Participants also recommended that all bilateral assistance programmes to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union should be designed to ensure that women participate in, and benefit from, such assistance.

The five-day seminar, which began on 8 April, was organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Office at Vienna, with substantive support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

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According to a report issued today by UNDRO, 53 people died and 232 were injured in earthquakes which hit Peru from 4 to 8 April.

The agency reported eight seismic shocks which measured between 4.5 and 6.2 on the Richter scale. The earthquakes struck in the north-eastern part of Peru, in the Moyabamba and Rioja provinces.

Over 9,000 dwellings had been affected, UNDRO said, particularly in rural areas, which were already hit in May last year. The relief agency reported that many residents were still living outside their homes, without proper shelter and sanitation, in the fear of further shocks, the likelihood of which was confirmed by experts.

United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/870
17 April 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General chairs regular spring session of Administrative Committee on Coordination in Paris; holds talks with French leaders on Iraqi refugee situation, Western Sahara and Cambodia.

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees calls tragedy in northern Iraq "fastest growing refugee situation in modern history".

- Romania and the Republic of Korea contribute to humanitarian relief for Iraqi refugees.

- Proposal for South African entrepreneurs to be trained for non-racial democracy by transnational corporations with no links in the country, introduced in Commission on Transnational Corporations.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar began today, Wednesday, chairing the regular spring session of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) at UNESCO House in Paris.

He met with President François Mitterrand and Foreign Minister Roland Dumas of France, for a discussion which centred on the situation of the Iraqi Kurds. The meeting also touched on the Western Sahara issue and the report the Secretary-General will submit to the Security Council, as well as the problem of Cambodia.

Following the meeting, the Secretary-General told correspondents that the United Nations team in northern Iraq was discussing with the Iraqi authorities the creation of "reception centres" for the Kurds and Shi'ites more or less everywhere in the territory. He said he had not yet heard the final result of the negotiations. However, he said, the Iraqi authorities were interested in the United Nations action, and he hoped to hear about the results before leaving Paris.

Asked if the intention of the United States, the United Kingdom and France to provide military protection for the Kurds had been discussed, the

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For information media—not an official record

Secretary-General said it was an aspect "on which we have to reflect; because we would first of all like to be in touch with the Iraqis to see what their reaction would be to this military presence on their territory".

In reply to another question, the Secretary-General said it was hoped that the Iraqis would understand that the objective of the three countries was humanitarian, as also was that of the United Nations.

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Following a four-day tour of Iraqi refugee camps in Iran, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata, called the tragedy "the fastest growing refugee situation in modern history".

In an update yesterday, the agency said Mrs. Ogata had visited several border camps where an estimated 1 million refugees have been granted sanctuary. She was visibly moved by the plight of the destitute refugees, many of whom arrived with serious wounds, UNHCR said. According to the Iranian Government, the infant mortality rate among the refugees is extremely high with nearly 1,000 babies dying each day from exposure. UNHCR officials in Iran said the relief effort lacked nearly all essentials and it was difficult to keep pace with the need, though help was on its way.

Talking to correspondents in Teheran yesterday before departure for Turkey, Mrs. Ogata said the international community had proven that it could respond "swiftly and effectively" to a political crisis. The challenge now, she said, was for the international community to react "in equal measure to this humanitarian crisis".

The UNHCR head then met with Turkish President Turgut Ozal to discuss the massive humanitarian relief effort currently under way along the Turkish/Iraqi border.

On 9 April, the United Nations appealed to donors for $400 million, out of which $238.5 million was for UNHCR to cover the most urgent needs of the then estimated 1.5 million refugees in Iran and Turkey over a period of three months. So far, countries had pledged about $26 million, UNHCR said.

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The Government of Romania is to contribute some $215,000 to the humanitarian relief efforts for the Iraqi civilian population in various parts of Iraq.

The Ambassador of Romania to the United Nations, Aurel-Dragos Munteanu, said yesterday in a letter to the Secretary-General that the contribution would consist of tents, blankets, clothes and other supplies for humanitarian needs. He said Romania was cooperating with other countries to ensure the transportation of the humanitarian assistance to its destination.

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The Government of the Republic of Korea will also provide humanitarian aid in the amount of $300,000 for the Kurdish and other Iraqi refugees. In addition, the Korean Red Cross has contributed $100,000 to the International Committee of the Red Cross to support its relief activities for the Iraqi refugees. The announcement was made today by the Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations of the Republic of Korea.

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A draft resolution proposing to have South African entrepreneurs trained by transnational corporations with no links in the country, was introduced this morning in the Commission concerned with such corporations.

According to the text, the Economic and Social Council would request the Secretary-General to continue investigating the possibility of such training of South African entrepreneurs for a non-racial democratic South Africa.

In the draft, sponsored and introduced by Algeria on behalf of the African Group, the Council would also reaffirm that Governments, entrepreneurs and enterprises have ethical, moral and political responsibilities to comprehensively deny sustenance to the apartheid system. It would reiterate its call on all transnational corporations to stop immediately any operations in South Africa and all trade and economic links with the racist minority regime, also calling on multilateral financial and development institutions to cease immediately any support or collaboration with that regime.

Also this morning, the Commission took up the item on strengthening the negotiating capacity of developing countries in their dealings with transnational corporations.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

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18 April 1991

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Iraq signs agreement welcoming United Nations humanitarian help to refugees in northern part of country.

- Secretary-General says victory of allied countries over Iraq was result of multilateral action "legitimized" by Organization.

- Secretary-General asks Security Council to authorize United Nations mission in El Salvador as soon as possible.

- Germany donates $251.5 million for humanitarian emergency aid to Iraqi refugees.

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The Government of Iraq signed an agreement in Baghdad today welcoming United Nations efforts to promote the voluntary return home of Iraqi displaced persons, and the Organization's humanitarian measures to avert new flows of Iraqi refugees.

In a memorandum signed also by the Secretary-General's Executive Delegate for the United Nations Humanitarian Programme for Iraq, Kuwait and the Iraq/Iran and Iraq/Turkey border areas, Sadruddin Aga Khan, Iraqi authorities promised their full support to and cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies and programmes.

The Iraqi Government said it would assist in the establishment of United Nations sub-offices and humanitarian centres in the border areas, to be staffed with United Nations civilian personnel as well as personnel from other humanitarian organizations, in order to provide urgent assistance and relief to the refugees.

It further would allow the United Nations, in agreement and cooperation with Iraq, to organize air lifts to the areas concerned, as well as transportation by road of humanitarian assistance from and through the neighbouring countries.

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Both parties agreed that humanitarian assistance would be impartial and that all civilians in need, wherever they are located, would be entitled to receive it.

The memorandum is a result of discussions held in Baghdad between the Iraqi Government and the two United Nations missions sent to the area. It will be reviewed on 31 December with a view to assessing any further need for humanitarian operations.

A United Nations official told correspondents today that the Secretary-General had welcomed the agreement which he said would enable the United Nations to provide "desperately needed humanitarian assistance" to the suffering civilian population in all parts of Iraq, including displaced persons and returnees. The official said the leaders of the two missions, Sadruddin Aga Khan and Eric Suy, would go to Paris tomorrow to report to the Secretary-General and to discuss the urgent measures now needed for complete implementation of the new plan.

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said yesterday in a statement to the European Parliament that the victory of the allied, or coalition, countries over Iraq was "not a victory for the United Nations".

"It was not a United Nations war", he said. The victory was the result of a multilateral action authorized and, therefore, legitimized by the United Nations.

He went on to say that the only war which could nowdays be considered just was the sanctioned war provided for in the United Nations Charter as the last resort and decided upon by the international community, as represented in the Security Council. The recent conflict in the Gulf was proof, he said, that international security could only be collective in nature, and that a military Power could not engage in hostilities without multilateral support, without the support of other States and without the legitimacy that only the United Nations could confer on its action.

The establishment of the new world order would have to take place within the framework of the United Nations, the Secretary-General said, but a United Nations which did not resort to the use of double standards -- a United Nations whose impartiality ensured its credibility.

Addressing the issue of chemical weapons, Mr. Perez de Cuellar reminded the Parliament that negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva were at an advanced stage. He called on the European representatives to use their influence and power as parliamentarians to work for a total international ban on chemical weapons.

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Raising the question of arms sales, the Secretary-General expressed hope that arms sales would be limited in the Middle East, the main purchaser of arms, and in some developing countries, which he said "sometimes give priority to guns rather than to the bread that their peoples need".

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The Secretary-General has asked the Security Council to authorize "without delay" the first phase of a United Nations mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) to monitor and promote human rights, investigate violations, and educate the Salvadorian people on human rights issues.

In a report to the Council, dated 16 April, the Secretary-General recommended that the mission be established as soon as possible, in advance of a cease-fire agreement.

He said he was convinced that the new mission "would promote a significant improvement in the human rights situation in El Salvador and would also act as a positive impetus to the negotiations" under way between the Salvadorian Government and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN).

The ONUSAL could begin its functions in June, the Secretary-General said, after authorization by the Council and approval of costs and personnel by the General Assembly.

According to the agreement reached last July by the Salvadorian Government and FMLN, the mission will monitor the human rights situation in El Salvador, investigate specific cases of alleged violations, and promote respect for human rights.

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The Government of Germany has contributed $251.5 million for humanitarian emergency aid to Iraqi refugees.

The Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations said in a press release yesterday that the aid was closely coordinated with German and international relief organizations as well as with other Governments. Germany has already donated $17.6 million as part of the $185 million emergency aid provided by the European Economic Community (EEC).

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

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DH/872
19 April 1991

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General in Paris hears report on humanitarian assistance for Iraqi civilians; holds talks with French and other officials.

- Sadruddin Aga Khan says Iraqi cooperation with United Nations humanitarian efforts is "important" -- now to be "translated into action".

- Spokesman for United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission reports of continuing deployment of personnel.

- World Children's Day to be celebrated at Headquarters under the theme "Lend me a hand, let's build a bright, clean land".

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar held a special private meeting today in Paris to hear a report from Sadruddin Aga Khan, his Executive Delegate, who has just returned from Iraq, following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Iraqi Government. During the meeting, Sadruddin Aga Khan informed the heads of the United Nations system present in Paris for the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) meetings of the urgent need for a coordinated action for humanitarian help to the civilian populations in Iraq, including returnees and displaced persons.

The Secretary-General also met with French Prime Minister Michel Rocard on the situation in Iraq and the United Nations role in humanitarian efforts in that country. During the meeting, the Prime Minister and the Secretary-General also discussed the situation in Cambodia, Western Sahara, Cyprus, the situation in Africa and the financial situation of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General also met with Pietre Kravchenko, Foreign Minister of Byelorussia. He was scheduled to hold talks later today with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas.

Yesterday, the Secretary-General met with Edwige Avice, Deputy Foreign Minister in charge of the Foreign Ministry in the absence of Foreign Minister

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Dumas. The discussions focused on the situation in Iraq and the Kurdish problem.

The Secretary-General is presiding over the current ACC session in Paris.

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The agreement signed yesterday in Baghdad on cooperation between Iraq and the United Nations on humanitarian emergency assistance to Iraqi refugees was now to be translated into action, Sadruddin Aga Khan said today in Geneva.

Sadruddin Aga Khan, the Executive Delegate of the Secretary-General to coordinate a United Nations inter-agency humanitarian programme for Iraq, Kuwait and the Turkish and Iranian border areas, was briefing correspondents on his recent trip to Iraq.

Referring to the humanitarian centres to be set up by the United Nations, he said it was still too early to say how many centres would be needed. However, he said, that would "remain an empty shell" unless the millions of dollars which were needed for the operation were provided by bilateral sources.

An additional $400 million had to be added to the amounts already announced for the United Nations humanitarian programmes in the region, since the situation was constantly evolving, he said.

Asked whether the United Nations staff in the region intended to cooperate with the allies in their relief efforts, Sadruddin Aga Khan said the Organization was "in touch with what was being done there". There had to be liaison and contacts between the different groups, he added.

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The spokesman for the United Nations Iraq Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) stated today that Major General Greindl, UNIKOM's Chief Military Observer, and an advance party had visited the demilitarized zone for reconnaissance, and since then, the deployment of the force had been continuing progressively.

In a statement issued at Headquarters, he said most of the 300 military observers were expected to have arrived in the area by this weekend. The temporary deployment of infantry companies from other existing peace-keeping operations (the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)) would begin on Monday, 22 April, he said. The bulk of UNIKOM personnel were expected to arrive in the mission area in the middle of next week.

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More than 1,000 children from over 100 countries will gather in the United Nations General Assembly this Sunday, 21 April, to celebrate "World Children's Day" under the theme "Lend a hand, let's build a bright, clean

land". The children, aged 6 to 12, will present the work they are doing in their respective countries to improve the environment.

The event, organized by the non-governmental organization, World Children's Day Foundation, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), will take place in the spirit of the World Summit for Children (New York, 29-30 September 1990) when world leaders vowed their "solemn commitment to give high priority to the rights of children, to their survival and to their protection".

Child delegates from the six initiating countries -- Canada, Egypt, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan and Sweden -- will circulate a petition, which will be signed by all the children, asking Heads of State about the goals for children that have been achieved so far, six months after the Summit.

The celebration of World Children's Day at the United Nations was started in 1986 by two Turkish-American students from the Ataturk School in New York who wrote a letter to the children of the world asking them to join together to create a better future. Since then more than 4,000 children from 137 countries have participated in World Children's Day at the United Nations.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

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DH/873
22 April 1991

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General appoints heads of Special Commission to monitor and verify Iraq's destruction or rendering harmless of its weapons systems.

- Secretary-General holds talks with French officials and his envoys to Gulf region; receives honorary law degree from Bordeaux University.

- Chief Military Observer of United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission informs Iraqi Government officials in Baghdad of UNIKOM deployment plan.

- Secretary-General calls on Security Council to authorize establishment of United Nations mission to monitor referendum for self-determination of peoples of Western Sahara.

- Co-Chairmen of Paris Conference and Secretary-General appeal for voluntary cease-fire in Cambodia.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar today, through his spokeswoman, announced the appointment of Ambassador Rolf Ekeus as Executive Chairman, and Robert L. Gallucci as Deputy Executive Chairman, of the Special Commission to carry out the tasks called for in Security Council resolution 687 (1991) of 3 April. The resolution -- setting the terms for cease-fire -- calls, among other things, for the removal of all of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

In a report to the Council, dated 19 April, the Secretary-General recommended that a Special Commission be established as soon as possible to begin on-site inspections. He proposed that it be composed of 20 to 25 persons, representing five groups: biological and chemical weapons; ballistic missiles; nuclear-weapons capabilities; future compliance; and operations support. The operations support would be assisted by a few hundred technical experts serving as inspectors, disposal teams and field support

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officers. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would monitor the removal of nuclear-weapons-usable material from Iraq, the Secretary-General said.

* * *

The Secretary-General was in Bordeaux today where this evening he received an honorary degree in law from Bordeaux University.

Before leaving Paris last Friday, the Secretary-General had a meeting with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas. They discussed the Persian Gulf in view of recent developments.

On Saturday, the Secretary-General received Sadruddin Aga Khan, his Executive Delegate, who came to Paris from Iraq to brief the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and to report to the Secretary-General on the situation in Iraq. The Secretary-General also received Eric Suy, his Personal Envoy to Iraq, who also reported to him on his mission.

The Secretary-General then presided over a meeting attended by Sadruddin Aga Khan and Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who came to Paris to confer with the Secretary-General.

The same group, under the Chairmanship of the Secretary-General, also had a meeting with the United States Ambassador to Geneva, Morris B. Abram, to discuss the present situation at the borders of Iraq and Turkey.

The Secretary-General will return to Paris tomorrow on his way to New York.

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A United Nations official today announced that Chief Military Observer Major-General Gunther Greindl had travelled to Baghdad during the weekend to meet with Iraqi Government officials to inform them of the plan for the deployment to the demilitarized zone of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM).

The total strength of UNIKOM as of today was 76, including 67 in Kuwait, six in Baghdad and three in Riyadh, the official said. Major-General Greindl had designated a commander for each of three sectors within the demilitarized zone -- north, central and south. All main routes used to supply UNIKOM had been cleared of mines, and work continued on routes to be used for patrolling.

The official said all military observers were expected to be in place and all observation posts to open on schedule by next week.

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The Secretary-General has called on the Security Council to authorize the establishment of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western

Sahara (MINURSO), envisaged to monitor the holding of "free, fair and impartial" elections in the Territory.

In a report to the Council, dated 19 April, the Secretary-General said he would appoint a Special Representative to head and direct MINURSO, and who would report to him and make recommendations on the Mission.

The Secretary-General stressed that certain essential conditions must be met before the referendum could be held, such as the Council's full support and backing to MINURSO. He also stressed the necessity of the full cooperation of the two parties, meaning the cessation of all hostile acts, and the availability of necessary financial resources from United Nations member countries.

The Secretary-General went on to say that the repatriation part of MINURSO's operation should be managed by UNHCR. The cost of repatriation had been estimated at some $34 million, which would be funded through voluntary contributions. The total cost of MINURSO was estimated at approximately $200 million, to be considered as expenses of the United Nations to be borne by Member countries' assessed contributions to the Organization, the Secretary-General said.

In August 1988, the two parties in the dispute -- the Moroccan Government and the Frente Popular para la Liberacion de Saguia el-Hamra y de Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) -- agreed, in principle, to the Secretary-General's proposal to hold a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

* * *

The Co-Chairmen of the Paris Conference on Cambodia and the Secretary-General today issued a statement in which they expressed concern about recent reports of intensified fighting in Cambodia.

They recalled that the Security Council and the General Assembly had unanimously urged all parties to the conflict to exercise maximum self-restraint, so as to create a climate conducive to the achievement of a comprehensive political settlement.

The two Co-Chairmen, the Foreign Ministers of France and Indonesia, said they hoped to convene a meeting with the members of the Supreme National Council in Jakarta before the end of spring, in order to pursue the discussions on the draft agreements of last November and explore ways to resolve the pending issues. They appealed to all parties to the conflict to observe a temporary cessation of hostilities, from the first of May at least until the conclusion of the Jakarta meeting.

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United Nations

Press Release

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23 April 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Team from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to establish field offices along Iraqi border with Turkey and Iran to help refugees return to Iraq.

- Iraq asks United Nations to assume responsibility for relief camps established by United States and other foreign troops in northern part of country.

- Special Committee against Apartheid deplores decision by European Community to lift certain sanctions against South Africa.

- UNICEF Executive Board hears calls for need to follow-up on Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at 1990 World Summit for Children.

- Speakers in Disarmament Commission cite Gulf crisis as evidence of need for regional approaches to arms control.

- Office of United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator reports on earthquake in Costa Rica.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced today that it would send an advance team to Baghdad this week to establish field offices in areas of refugee outflow along the Turkish and Iranian frontiers.

The agency said in a communique that the team of 10 to 15 international experts would be deployed throughout Iraq as a result of last week's agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Iraq. It said the field offices would work to ensure the "personal safety and the provision of humanitarian assistance and relief" for all Iraqi refugees and displaced people who voluntarily want to return to their homes.

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For information media—not an official record

The UNHCR said that so far it had received almost $43 million of the $238.5 million needed to fund its emergency operations in Iran and Turkey. It said an additional $38 million would be needed to fund aid operations within Iraq.

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Iraq has asked the United Nations to assume responsibility for relief centres which are being set up for refugees in the northern part of the country by United States armed forces and other foreign troops.

In a letter, dated 21 April, to the Secretary-General dated 21 April, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Ahmed Hussein, said now that an agreement had been reached between the United Nations and Iraq on the establishment of humanitarian centres throughout the country to assist in the care and repatriation of refugees, the allied camps were no longer necessary or justified. He said the presence of United States and other foreign forces on Iraqi soil was a violation of national sovereignty.

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The Special Committee against Apartheid has deplored the decision of the European Community to lift a number of sanctions against South Africa.

In a statement issued yesterday by the Chairman, Ibrahim Gambari of Nigeria, the Special Committee said the decision was counter-productive at this stage of developments, because as of yet the conditions for negotiations had not been established, and agreement had not been reached on the mechanisms for the preparation of a new constitution. In addition, it said, many political prisoners were still in jail and political exiles had not yet been permitted to return without restrictions.

The Committee appealed to all Governments to maintain existing measures until the changes in South Africa were profound and irreversible.

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The Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) began its annual session yesterday, hearing speakers stress the need to follow-up on the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the 1990 World Summit for Children.

The Board is considering UNICEF's proposed budget of almost $395 million for 1992-1993, as well as programme recommendations for countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Americas, totalling some $1,360 billion.

The session was opened by the Chairman of the Board, Lisbet Palme of Sweden, who stressed that in order to improve the plight of children in Africa, UNICEF would have to overcome multiple scourges of apartheid, war,

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poverty and environmental degradation. She said the World Summit's solid commitment to give higher priority to children's concerns could only be achieved through greater resolve at all political levels.

UNICEF's Executive Director, James P. Grant, cited the current tragedy in Iraq, stressing the Fund's continuing responsibility to respond to emergency situations. He outlined his agency's accomplishments in the past year, including the Summit, and the progress made towards achieving universal child immunization.

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The Disarmament Commission, which began a three-week session yesterday, has heard several speakers cite the recent conflict in the Gulf as highlighting the need for regional approaches to arms control as well as for efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction.

Regional and international security were closely interrelated, speakers said. Many said that distinctions between bilateral and multilateral disarmament could no longer be sustained, nor could the distinction between disarmament and questions of international security.

Delegates also urged support for transparency in military matters -- activities as well as capabilities. They said effective collection and dissemination of relevant military information were vital to disarmament.

In addition, speakers called for renewed efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament, the development of treaties on nuclear-weapons testing and chemical weapons, and the reduction of conventional military spending in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

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The Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) reported today that a powerful earthquake had hit Costa Rica and northern Panama yesterday, killing so far some 20 to 30 people.

The agency said the quake occurred about 70 miles south-east of San Jose, Costa Rica's capital city, causing severe damage to housing. It said the largest hospital in the Atlantic port city of Limon had been evacuated. The UNDRO has arranged for the dispatch of a team to the area, and an international appeal for assistance is under way.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

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DH/875
24 April 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission takes over three observation posts in northern sector of demilitarized zone between the two countries.

- Secretary-General designates deputy to his Personal Representative for Central America to observe meetings between Guatemalan Government and Unidad Revoluncionaria Nacional Guatemalteca.

- United Nations Development Programme Administrator appoints new Director of Regional Bureau for Latin America and Caribbean.

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A United Nations official announced today that the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) had officially taken over three observation posts in the northern sector of the demilitarized zone today, and a flag-raising ceremony had been held at one of the sites shortly before noon, local time.

He said aerial reconnaissance of the entire zone was carried out yesterday as part of an engineering survey, as preparations are being made for the deployment of UNIKOM throughout the zone. Total strength of the force stood at 10 yesterday, with military observers reported to be arriving in significant numbers and being absorbed into UNIKOM with a comprehensive training programme. Infantry units from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) were travelling overland in large convoys and were expected to arrive in the area today through Friday, the official said.

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The spokeswoman for Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said today that he had designated the deputy to his Personal Representative for Central America, Francesc Vendrell, to observe meetings to be held between the Government of Guatemala and Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

She said the meetings were taking place today and tomorrow in Mexico City in the presence of the Conciliator and members of the National Reconciliation Commission of Guatemala in order to discuss an agenda and a procedure for the talks which the two parties are to conduct in pursuance of the Agreement signed in Oslo last March. In that Agreement and subsequently, the Secretary-General was asked to be represented by an observer at today's and subsequent meetings.

* * *

The Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), William H. Draper III, announced today the appointment of Fernando Zumbado of Costa Rica as Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, succeeding Augusto Ramirez-Ocampo who returned to Colombia last October. Mr. Zumbado is expected to join UNDP on 15 May.

Mr. Zumbado has held a number of posts in the Costa Rican Government, including Minister of Planning and Director of the Regional and Urban Planning Department.

From 1982 to 1984, Mr. Zumbado was Costa Rica's Ambassador to the United Nations, and in 1985, its Ambassador to the United States and to the Organization of American States (OAS). From 1986 to 1990, he served as his country's Minister of Housing and Human Settlements.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/876
25 April 1991

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General consults with Permanent Representatives of Iraq, France, United Kingdom, United States on Iraqi request for United Nations to take over allied refugees camps in northern part of country.

- World Health Organization reports more than 177,000 new cholera cases in 12 countries.

- United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission is reinforced by peace-keepers arriving from Lebanon and Cyprus.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, commenting last night on the refugee situation in Northern Iraq, told correspondents he hoped the announced initiative from Baghdad to seek an arrangement with the Kurds would solve the humanitarian problems.

Asked if the United Nations was moving fast enough to meet the needs of the refugees, the Secretary-General said the Organization was moving as fast as it could and was constantly in touch with the humanitarian agencies both in Geneva and New York. He added that he would appoint Michael Priestley to be the coordinator in New York, in the same way he had appointed Sadruddin Aga Kahn to be based in Geneva and Bernt Bernander in Baghdad.

Questioned about the Iraqi request for the United Nations to take over allied refugee camps, the Secretary-General said he was considering the request and had been meeting with the Ambassadors of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to discuss the matter. He said he was scheduled to meet with the Iraqi Ambassador today, and that everybody had agreed, in principle, on the Iraqi notion.

In a related development, Iraq repeated yesterday its complaint that United States and other foreign troops were violating its sovereignty and territorial integrity by conducting relief operations and using helicopters to land military forces in the country.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

In a letter to the Secretary-General, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Ahmed Hussein, asked the United Nations to take immediate action to assume its functions of providing relief at the American camps in accordance with the agreement reached on 18 April.

Meanwhile, a United Nations official said today that the Organization would be sending a team of about 30 international experts to the northern part of Iraq over the weekend.

The experts were drawn from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The team would carry with it cargo of supplies from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as UNHCR radio equipment.

The official said the Executive Delegate's representative in Baghdad was in northern Iraq now to look at possible sights for humanitarian centres. A convoy of UNICEF supplies from Baghdad and a UNHCR convoy coming from Turkey, headed by Steffan de Mistura, Special Envoy of the Executive Delegate, was expected to arrive at the affected areas as soon as possible.

In related news, the European Economic Community (EEC) announced yesterday that it is ready to set up camps for Iraqi refugees in Iraqi territory.

In a communique, the EEC delegation to the United Nations said its aid had financed relief operations in neighbouring Turkey and Iran only. It said the EEC member countries which had military personnel on the spot had been contacted to assess humanitarian needs for future aid in Iraq.

The EEC relief operations, under way since early April, have been made possible by a $178 million emergency donation.

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The World Health Organization (WHO) said today that as of mid-April, it had received reports of over 177,000 new cases of cholera in 12 countries. Five of these countries -- Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru -- accounted for 78 per cent of the total number of cases and for over 1,200 deaths. Those countries had never reported cholera in this century.

The WHO estimated that in Latin America alone, between 90 million and 120 million people were now at risk because of a lack of access to safe water, safe food and adequate sanitation.

To meet the challenges, the WHO announced that its Director-General, Hiroshi Nakajima, had set up a Global Cholera Control Task Force at its headquarters in Geneva to coordinate the agency's global action with regard to cholera control. Made up of WHO experts in disease surveillance, case

(more)

management, water and sanitation, food safety, emergency intervention and information and education, the team will work in cooperation with the WHO regional office.

The WHO said that most cholera cases could be adequately treated by administering a solution of oral rehydration salts. It said that during an epidemic outbreak, 80 to 90 per cent of patients could generally be treated by oral rehydration alone.

* * *

In an update on the situation of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), a United Nations official said today that the total strength of the force was now 321, consisting of 113 military observers and 208 members of support units, including 150 Canadian engineers.

He said 222 personnel on loan from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) were proceeding towards the area in a convoy across the desert. They had arrived at the Saudi/Jordanian border today and were expected in Kuwait tomorrow or Saturday. Another 200 members of UNIFIL had been flown into Kuwait and the rest would arrive today.

Meanwhile, from the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), 35 Danes and 35 Austrians had left Cyprus this morning by air and were expected to arrive in Kuwait later today, he said. The remaining 160 to be called in from UNFICYP were expected to arrive by air no later than Saturday. The two Swiss aircraft committed to the Force were in place, he said, while a Chilean helicopter was expected in the area on Monday.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/877
26 April 1991

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- United Nations to take over allied refugee camps in northern Iraq.

- Secretary-General recommends cost of United Nations Mission for referendum in Western Sahara to be borne by Member countries.

- Secretary-General says United Nations "master plan" is being drawn up in cooperation with affected Governments to ameliorate consequences of Chernobyl nuclear accident.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar told the Security Council this afternoon that he had asked a number of senior officials, including his personal representative Jean-Claude Aimé, to go to Geneva this weekend for consultations with his Executive Delegate, Sadruddin Aga Kahn, and the High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata. The aim was to work out a timetable for the establishment of the United Nations humanitarian centres.

He said the refugee camps set up by American, British and French forces on Iraqi territory would be taken over by United Nations staff as soon as possible in accordance with the Baghdad Agreement of 18 April between the Iraqi Government and the United Nations.

In order to speed up the relief process, a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) convoy of relief commodities would be directed into northern Iraq from Turkey on Monday. A second convoy would travel to the same region from Baghdad on the same day. Together, he said, the two convoys would set up facilities for distribution and storage of the relief commodities, and would discuss modalities for the take-over of the allied camps.

In a separate development, a United Nations official said today that United Nations civilian offices in Iraq and Iran (UNOSGI) had begun an investigation of alleged violations at the two countries' border in response to a request by the Iraqi Government.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The Secretary-General had proposed in a report of 26 February to the Security Council -- which it endorsed -- the establishment in Iran and Iraq of civilian offices which would also include a few military observers for the purpose of investigating and helping resolve difficulties of a military nature which may arise at the border.

The spokeswoman for the Secretary-General said he was following very carefully the developments on the border between the two countries, and would recommend to the Council, if the situation so required, an increase in the number of military observers.

* * *

In other news today, the Security Council met in informal consultations to discuss the situation in El Salvador, including the Secretary-General's report recommending the establishment of a United Nations mission in the country to verify observance of human rights. The Council was also scheduled to discuss the procedures for the election of the Secretary-General, and to consider article 50, which states that countries faced with economic hardship due to the imposition of sanctions shall have the right to consult the Council with regard to a solution.

The Secretary-General has asked the Security Council to authorize, as soon as possible, the establishment of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to supervise free and fair elections in the territory.

The Council is currently considering a report by the Secretary-General containing a plan for the settlement of the question, accepted by both the Kingdom of Morocco and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO).

In a statement during Council consultations yesterday, he said that no effort had been spared in seeking to achieve savings in the estimated expenditures for MINURSO. The overall cost of the mission was at present estimated at $200 million, including expenditures for the repatriation programme of the High Commissioner for Refugees amounting to some $34 million, to be financed from voluntary contributions.

The Secretary-General stressed that the voluntary contributions needed for the repatriation programme must be paid in full before the deployment of MINURSO, since the return of refugees was crucial to the operation's success. He said he was currently holding consultations with certain Member States on this subject.

The Secretary-General further recommended that, pending the Council's approval, the expenditures of MINURSO should be considered as expenses of the Organization to be borne by member countries.

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Today marks the fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion which resulted in the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people from the Ukranian town due to the threat of radioactivity.

In a statement on this occasion, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar welcomed the initiatives taken by the Governments of the Soviet Union, Byelorussia and the Ukraine in calling upon the United Nations system to join with them in efforts to ameliorate the consequences of the accident.

Without precedent in history, he said, the accident had significant and educative effects. It had raised the global consciousness of the dangers shared by peoples in the East, West, North and South and had resulted in the recognition of the need for greater international cooperation to ensure the safety of nuclear energy.

The Secretary-General went on to say that several specialized agencies of the United Nations system had already undertaken significant measures, including the drawing up of a "master plan" of the assistance needed. The document would be presented at a pledging conference, over which he would preside. In closing, the Secretary-General repeated his appeal for help for the victims of the disaster, which, he said, would continue to cause suffering far into the future.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/878
29 April 1991

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council appeals for assistance to 21 countries affected by sanctions against Iraq.

- Security Council authorizes establishment of United Nations Mission for Referendum in Western Sahara.

- Secretary-General to consult with Permanent Representatives of France, United Kingdom, United States, Iraq on proposal to establish United Nations police force to protect Iraqi refugees and international relief workers.

- Secretary-General welcomes agreement signed in Mexico City by Government of El Salvador and Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional.

- Resumed session of General Assembly takes up financing of Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, among other items. President appeals to international community for aid to victims of recent earthquakes.

* * *

The Security Council this afternoon issued a "solemn appeal" for assistance to 21 countries confronted with special economic problems arising from their compliance with sanctions imposed against Iraq by the Council in its resolution 661 (1990).

It took that action through a statement read out by Council President Paul Noterdaeme (Belgium), who appealed to States, international financial institutions and United Nations bodies. The Council also invited those which had not yet done so to inform the Secretary-General of measures they had taken on behalf of States which had invoked Article 50 of the United Nations Charter. That Article declares that any country finding itself confronted with special economic problems arising from preventive or enforcement measures taken by the Council shall have the right to consult the Council regarding a solution of those problems.

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For information media—not an official record

The 21 States seeking the Council's support on this matter are: Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Djibouti, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Poland, Romania, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Pakistan, Philippines, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen and Yugoslavia.

In a separate meeting today, the Council unanimously endorsed the Secretary-General's plan to establish as soon as possible the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The plan is based on an agreed settlement of the question under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The main elements of the settlement are a cease-fire between Morocco and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) and a referendum by which the people of the Territory are to choose between independence and integration with Morocco.

Briefing correspondents today, the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Western Sahara, Johannes Manz, said the operation was "unique" and one of the most challenging the United Nations had ever undertaken. He said his task was to ensure that the people of Western Sahara would be enabled to exercise their right to self-determination freely, without military or administrative constraints.

Mr. Manz noted that this was the first time the United Nations had been given full responsibility for the organization and conduct of a referendum. What made the operation complex, he said, was its limited time-frame which made a specific calendar necessary. The operation was further restricted by budgetary constraints, which made it necessary to ensure that all staff assigned to the mission were of the highest calibre and integrity.

* * *

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar commented this afternoon on a proposal to establish a United Nations police force to protect Iraqi refugees and international relief workers. In reply to questions by correspondents, he said he considered the security of the Kurds important. He was going to discuss the matter with France, the United Kingdom and the United States -- three members of the Security Council -- as well as with the Ambassador of Iraq.

Meanwhile, the Government of Japan has informed the Secretary-General in a letter dated 25 April that it has decided to provide new emergency financial assistance for Kurds and other displaced persons, bringing total Japanese assistance to $100 million. The letter said the decision was taken in response to the requests of international organizations.

In related news, emergency food aid worth nearly $59 million will be provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) for Iraqi refugees in Iraq and Turkey, and refugees and drought victims in Africa.

The agency said that a shipment of tons of wheat, rice, canned fish and high-energy biscuits would be supplied to the 1 million Iraqi refugees in

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northern Iraq. Much of the food had already been purchased inside Turkey and was on its way to the Kurdish refugees. Half-a-million Iraqi refugees inside Turkey would also receive emergency food aid.

In addition, WFP has extended emergency food aid to drought victims in Ethiopia and to 200,000 Ethiopian returnees from Somalia as well as to Somali refugees in Kenya.

In a separate development, the spokesman for the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) said in a statement today that an incident had occurred at which a Kuwaiti military truck, partially loaded with ammunition, was driving backward towards the entrance of the SAS hotel, the temporary headquarters of UNIKOM, when it went up in flames.

He said a series of explosions followed, during which all civilian and military personnel were led to take coverage. The incident, which lasted for about 30 minutes, resulted in injuries to four people, none of whom was from UNIKOM. Eleven cars were destroyed, some of which were on loan to the mission, and eight were damaged, the spokesman said.

* * *

The Secretary-General said today through his spokeswoman that he was encouraged and pleased at the agreement signed in Mexico late Saturday by the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN).

He said the accord was important in itself as well as for the coming stages of negotiations, to which it could give new impetus. He especially thanked the Governments of Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela and the President of Spain, who he said had played an important role in ensuring the success of the just concluded talks.

He also welcomed the progress in talks between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) on a procedure and substantive agenda for the negotiations which will begin next month and in which his representative would participate.

* * *

At its resumed forty-fifth session, the General Assembly this morning decided to take up the financing of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) and six other issues.

Those subjects include restructuring of the United Nations in the economic and social fields; the date and venue of the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); financing United Nations peace-keeping operations; conditions of service for members of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU); budgetary implications of staff rules adopted by the Assembly last year and the question of filling a vacancy on the Staff Pension Committee.

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President Guido de Marco (Malta) addressed the loss of life and property damage resulting from recent earthquakes in Panama, Costa Rica and the Soviet Union. He appealed to the international community to show its solidarity through a quick and generous response to requests for help.

The Assembly will meet again on Thursday, 2 May to continue its consideration of the issues opened today and to take up reports of the Fifth Committee on special emergency assistance to Haiti, Costa Rica and Panama.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/879
30 April 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- New Executive Director of International Drug Control Programme calls for effective continuation of activities while units are integrated into single new programme.

- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees deplores killing of one of its teachers in Gaza Strip.

- Coordinator for follow-up relief to Chernobyl calls 1986 disaster "unique" -- with both causes and effects "invisible".

- United Nations is informed of earthquake in Georgia, Soviet Union.

* * *

Opening its thirty-fourth annual session yesterday in Vienna, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs was addressed by the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, Giorgio Giacomelli, who said it was essential to ensure the effective continuation of ongoing activities while restructuring the Organization's drug control efforts. In the fight against drugs, he said, there was a danger that the international community could find itself going in more than one direction. Therefore, it was important to coordinate the efforts and initiatives of organizations inside and outside the United Nations system.

Addressing the Commission yesterday, the Minister of Justice of Colombia, Jaime Geraldo Angel, said his country remained in the front-line of the war against drugs to which the rest of the world had not yet officially committed itself. Colombia was aware of the need to come up with new ways and means of overcoming the drug crisis, especially by strengthening the judicial system, he said. For example, judges' names were kept secret and they could hear cases with witnesses remaining anonymous.

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For information media—not an official record

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has deplored the killing last week of one of its teachers in the Gaza Strip.

The Agency expressed its concern for the welfare of Agency staff who it said were working in increasingly violent circumstances in the area.

According to UNRWA, the teacher was stabbed 11 times by masked men in broad daylight on the premises of an UNRWA elementary school in Khan Younis camp in full view of pupils. The Agency said the killing came as the culmination of a series of incidents in which UNRWA staff and property had been threatened and attacked by members of the community.

The UNRWA said that since the beginning of the Palestinian uprising, seven staff members had been killed in the Gaza Strip by unidentified assailants. Three of the killings took place on UNRWA premises.

* * *

First-hand impressions of the magnitude of the Chernobyl disaster have been recounted in Vienna by the Director of the United Nations Office in Vienna, and Coordinator for follow-up relief to Chernobyl, Margaret Anstee.

Just back from a week-long visit to the Soviet Union to estimate the long-term social and humanitarian needs of the people affected by the disaster, Miss Anstee told a United Nations press officer that her visit had made an emotional impact on her. She said her mission was concerned with estimating ways of getting people installed in better facilities as soon as possible in uncontaminated areas. It was also concerned with the health of the 600,000 people from all over the country who rallied to become liquidators and to work on the clean-up operation. In addition, areas such as agriculture and industry needed to be closely examined.

Miss Anstee called the disaster "unique", since both its causes and its effects were in some ways invisible. It was not a disaster which could be seen in concrete terms such as an earthquake or a war, bullets or bombs, she said, adding that its implications were long-lasting.

* * *

The Soviet Mission to the United Nations reported today that six districts in the Caucasian Republic of Georgia were hit hard yesterday by an earthquake which killed some 50 people and injured more than 360.

The Mission said in a press release that 80 per cent of hospitals, schools and pre-school institutions were destroyed. More than 2,000 servicemen, medics, mine rescuers, mountain-climbers and other specialists from units of the Transcaucasian military district were participating in the rescue operations. People were being evacuated from the disaster area by helicopter and automobiles.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/880
1 May 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General appoints members of Special Commission to monitor Iraq's destruction of its weapons systems.

- Office of United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator reports 1,000 people killed by cyclone in Bangladesh.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has appointed 19 experts as members of the Special Commission to monitor and verify Iraq's destruction or rendering harmless of its weapons systems. The experts come from Norway, Japan, Nigeria, Poland, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Canada, Australia, Austria, Soviet Union, Netherlands, Finland, France, Indonesia, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, China and Venezuela.

On 22 April, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of Ambassador Rolf Ekeus of Sweden as Executive Chairman, and Robert L. Gallucci of the United States as Deputy Executive Chairman, of the Commission, which was called for in Security Council resolution 687 (1991) of 3 April. The resolution -- setting the terms for a cease-fire -- calls, among other things, for the removal of all of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Members of the Commission represent five groups: biological and chemical weapons; ballistic missiles; nuclear-weapons capabilities; future compliance; and operations support. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is expected to monitor the removal of nuclear-weapons-usable material from Iraq.

* * *

The Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) reported today that a cyclone had hit the Bangladesh coastline yesterday, killing an estimated 1,000 people -- a figure which is expected to rise.

The agency said the storm had caused severe damage to housing, also interrupting communication with the affected area, which had made the assessment of damage preliminary. It also said the early-warning system and cyclone shelters were believed to have mitigated the number of casualties.

Because of the gravity of the situation, the Bangladesh Government has issued an appeal for international assistance.

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For information media—not an official record